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ABSTRACT

This report examines the educational needs of and services provided to children with disabilities in developing nations and identifies key strategies for developing educational provisions for this population. It stresses that integrated education and community-based rehabilitation are two approaches which can provide cost-effective and meaningful education and training for disabled persons. The need is established in tables providing data on number of special educational enrollments in 13 African countries and number of pupils enrolled in special education as a percentage of school-age population. Three basic principles or rights are stated: the right to education, the right to equality of opportunity, and the right to participate in society. Strategies to improve the provision of special education are then outlined for the following areas: legislation, administrative support, educational provision, early childhood education, preparation for adult life, parental involvement, training, and research and development. (DB)

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A Special Study for the
WORLD CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION FOR ALL
(Thailand, 5-9 March 1990)

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES :

Principles and Practice

by Seamus Hegarty

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

Seamus Hegarty

January 1990

ED-90/WS-6

The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Unesco.

Foreward

Disabled persons constitute an alarmingly high percentage of the population, particularly in developing countries . It is estimated that more than 500 million people in the world are disabled as a consequence of mental, physical or sensory impairment.

A series of international reports estimate that at least one child in ten is born with or acquires a serious impairment, which if no attention is given , could impede the development of the child. Many children with disabilities in developped countries receive special attention, through education and training. However, the situation is indeed more alarming in developing countries, where most of the world's children live, and very little is done to prevent either the occurence of the impairment, or its damaging cosequences.

About 80% of the estimated 200 million children in the world with disability are living in developing countries and very few receive good health care and education, and less than 2% receive special services of any kind.

The bleak international assessment is based on a series of reports across the continents. To understand these realities one need only visit any of the villages of Asia, Africa, Latin America or the Middle East, or any of the slums surrounding the cities in these areas. There one learns that along every road and path, in every cluster of dwellings, there are children who are being denied the possibility of personal development because they suffer impairments and because they are not receiving the benefits of the knowledge and skill that exist.

Certainly, the precise figures of disability estimations could be debated, however, one thing is clear, the need is there. This need is further compounded by poverty and underdevelopment but also by wars leading to devastation, creating a considerable social , economic, and emotional cost to the disabled person, their family and the wider community.

To improve the situation will require time but it primarily requires a committment and a political will to bring about change -- change of human attitudes and behaviour, the integration of new concepts into human service programmes, and the modification of development strategies.

On a more optimistic note, it can be demostrated that many needed forms of assistance can be rendered through the appropriate application of resources already available to many of the families and communities in devloping countries.
A modest enrichment of existing training programmes and basic health, welfare and education services can expand their coverage to include children with disabilities. In fact it is only through such improved application of existing human resources that there can be any hope of giving effective help to the millions of children affected, or in danger of being affected by disability.

Conscious of the magnitude of the needs and the limited resources , and bearing in mind the principles of normalization, integration, and participation, advocated by the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons, the Unesco Consultation on Special Education (1988) recognized integrated education and community based rehabilitation as two complementary approaches in providing cost effective and meaningful education and training for disabled persons. Both measures aim at reaching out to the greatest number of disabled persons and their families. They are two vital components of a comprehensive global strategy.

The process of change will succeed best with the initiative of Goverments and the participation of intergovernmental and non-governmental international organizations, bilateral aid programmes, voluntary agencies and community groups in the countries concerned..

Unesco

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

ABSTRACT

Children and young people with disabilities need education no less than their peers. Yet, around the world very many of those with disabilities receive little or no education.

This paper summarises estimates of the shortfall in appropriate educational provision. It sets out the basic principles underlying special educational provision. It addresses key strategies for policy makers in developing and enhancing the educational provision they make for children and young people with disabilities.

INTRODUCTION

All children have the right to be educated. One of the tragedies of our time is that very many children are not educated - and have no opportunity to go to school. This is compounded by the scarcity of educational opportunities in adult life.

The failure to provide education for all children ranks alongside famine and war as a major indictment of the current political order. It is also a significant challenge to it. A world with the technological and economic resources to achieve instantaneous global communication and put people into space can hardly say that educating all its children is impossible.

This challenge has all the more force where children and young people with disabilities[1] are concerned. Those with disabilities, who ironically have the greatest need of education, are the least likely to receive it. This is true of developed and developing countries alike. In developed countries many children with disabilities are formally excluded from the education system or receive less favourable treatment within it than other children, whereas in many developing countries the struggle to develop compulsory education for a majority of children takes precedence over meeting the special educational needs of those with disabilities.

Precise figures, particularly for developing countries, are difficult to establish but some studies are available which show the distressing scale of the problem. Ross (1988) summarised data gathered from 13 countries in eastern and southern Africa. Table 1 shows that virtually all the countries had special education enrolments for approximately 0.1% or fewer of the school age population.

[1] A precise definition is not being offered here. Terminology and categorisation vary widely from country to country. The target group includes those who have physical or sensory impairments, those who in comparison with age peers have difficulties in learning and communication and those whose behaviour cannot readily be contained in ordinary schools. What they have in common is a greater or lesser need for special educational provision over and above what the ordinary school offers to the generality of pupils. Estimates of the size of the group range from 10% to 20% of the school-age population.

Table 1

Number of special educational enrolments in 13 African countries as a percentage of the school age population

%	No. of countries
Less than 0.1	7
Between 0.1 and 0.2	4
More than 1%	1
No information	1
	13

(Adapted from Ross, 1988)

A broader UNESCO survey conducted in 1986/7 found that 34 out of 51 countries (drawn from all continents) supplying information had fewer than 1% of pupils enrolled in special educational provision (UNESCO, 1988a). Table 2 shows that 10 of these 34 had special educational provision available for less than 0.1% of pupils.

Table 2

Number of pupils enrolled in special education provision as a percentage of school age population

Range (%)	No. of countries
Less than 0.1	10
0.1 - 0.4	13
0.5 - 0.9	9
1.0 - 1.9	6
2.0 - 2.9	6
3.0 - 3.5	5
More than 3.5	2
No information given	7
	58

To appreciate the full significance of these figures we need to set them against estimates of the need for special education. A major UK government report (DES, 1978) recommended for planning purposes the assumption that 'about one in six children at any time and up to one in five children sometime during their school careers will require some form of special educational provision' (3.17). This concurs with an earlier UN estimate that 15% of children needed special education or rehabilitation measures of some kind, and that this proportion was higher in developing countries (UN, 1976).

The stark reality underlying these figures is that the great majority of children and young people with disabilities do not receive an appropriate education - if indeed they are offered any education. In many countries, less than one child in a hundred receives the special educational provision that s/he needs.

UNESCO has had since the early 70s a major commitment to improving the provision of special education around the globe. In 1971 it published

its first study of the 'present situation' of special education. This study was updated in the late 80s (UNESCO, 1988a). This commitment has been addressed particularly to action in developing countries, and major projects have been supported in African and Asian countries.

The two-year programme for 1990-91 proposes to address the special educational needs of children and young people with disabilities through an integrated education approach and community- based programmes. The proposed action will cover three main areas:

1. Planning, organisation and management of special educational provision

2. Teacher training for integrated education of children with disabilities

3. Early childhood disabilities - identification, assessment and intervention.

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the improvement of special educational provision by setting out the basic principles governing education for those with disabilities and drawing attention to strategies that policy makers can adopt to secure appropriate provision.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The basic principles underlying special education are very simple. Translating them into practice may be far from easy, but there is broad agreement on what they should be. The principles can be formulated in various ways. Here they will be set out in terms of three rights:

- the right to education
- the right to equality of opportunity
- the right to participate in society.

1 The right to education

The right of all children to education is enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and reiterated in many national policy statements. Regrettably, millions of children are not accorded this right. This fact does not weaken the right or reduce its

relevance; indeed, it makes action to secure its universal implementation all the more urgent. Children with disabilities are a major group for whom this right has still to be won in effective terms. Many countries - and educational policy makers - simultaneously accept the UN Declaration guaranteeing education for all and exclude children with disabilities from education. This is, to say the least, illogical. Either the UN Declaration is accepted in its sweeping simplicity and children with disabilities of whatever kind are brought into education, or the Declaration should be modified and tinkered with so that it fits the exigencies of current practice.

It is important to bear in mind that the right to education is a fundamental human right, something which each person has in virtue of the fact that they are human beings. In other words, it is not dependent on vocational or economic considerations. Education does of course make people more employable in a general way and can enhance their capacity to contribute to the economic well-being of the community, but neither of these is the reason why they are entitled to education. At a time when public expenditure is increasingly governed by market forces and instrumental views of education prevail, it is easy to lose sight of the inherent nature of the right to education. This is particularly significant where people with disabilities are concerned. Education may not succeed in making some people employable or economically self-sufficient, but that in no way reduces their entitlement to the resources that their education requires.

2 The right to equality of opportunity

Equality of opportunity raises very difficult questions. Like the right to education, the right to equality of educational opportunity is widely accepted as a general principle and largely ignored in practice. The problem here is greater than the customary gap between rhetoric and reality that is imposed by scarce resources and limited vision. Even where there is a commitment to implementing this right, it can be difficult to establish what is required in practice.

Equality of opportunity does not mean treating everybody in the same way. Thus, in education equal educational treatment is not the answer. Children are not the same and should not be treated as if they were. Indeed, the principle of justice requires that they be treated

unequally. As a simple example, consider the education of blind children: if equal treatment means being exposed, along with peers, to teaching with a high visual content, this is manifestly not giving them equality of educational opportunity. What is required is a means of translating the general principle of equal opportunity into concrete rights that are meaningful at the level of actual educational provision. This is given in part by the notion of differential educational treatment. Since children are different from each other, they must be treated in different ways in order to reach common goals. This brings the general principle down to the domain of practical decisions about pedagogy and resource allocation. These decisions can be extremely difficult in practice, particularly when teaching expertise and resources are in short supply. Some such framework, however, is essential both to moving advocacy for special education beyond placid generalities and to ensuring a meaningful place for special education at the level of actual educational provision.

3 The right to participate in society

This right is often expressed in negative terms - people should not be discriminated against or suffer restrictions on their lives over and above those common to other people. In education it has become commonplace to speak of educating children in the 'least restrictive environment'. These negative formulations abound because barriers and obstacles to participation are more evident and easier to pinpoint than actual participation.

As far as education is concerned, the right to participate means that children must not suffer needless restrictions in their access to education, in the range of curriculum on offer or in the quality of teaching they receive. They should not, without good reason, be educated separately from their age peers. Expressed positively, this means that children have the right to attend ordinary schools and to participate in the normal activities of the school alongside age peers unless there are specific reasons to the contrary. Where it is judged necessary to educate children in a segregated special school, care must be taken to ensure that the nature of the education on offer matches the mainstream curriculum as much as possible and that the quality of teaching is at least as good as it would be if they went to an ordinary school.

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

This section sets out a number of strategies which policy makers can adopt to improve the provision of special education in their countries. The topics covered are

- Legislation
- Administrative support
- Educational provision
- Early childhood education
- Preparation for adult life
- Parental involvement
- Training
- Research and development.

Much of the information on current practice at national level is drawn from a UNESCO survey conducted in 1986/7 (UNESCO, 1988a). This will be referred to as the UNESCO Review.

Legislation

It may seem odd to start with legislation as a key strategy for improving special educational provision. Legislation is couched in generic terms and can be very distant from the point of implementation. There are several reasons, however, why appropriate legislation is of paramount importance. First, it can articulate and reinforce a country's policy on special education. Educational and social policies are usually more detailed and flexible than the legislation if any that underpins them. A legal framework can, however, hold the different elements of policy together, clarify ambiguities and resolve tensions between them.

Secondly, legislation can help to secure resources, or the appropriate channelling of resources. Thus, legislation can be used to target expenditure on certain groups of children, it can require that provision

be supported by certain administrative structures, it can insist on certain levels of teacher training and it can require that special educational provision be made in ordinary schools.

Passing laws of itself achieves nothing, and legislating for these desirable outcomes is in no way to guarantee that they will be realised. This brings in two further functions of legislation, viz to draw attention to any discrepancies between policy and practice, and to give ammunition to those who seek change. Take parental involvement in decision-making, for example. There is a lot of rhetoric about taking account of parents' views but in practice they are often ignored. Legislation that guarantees their right to be consulted on their child's assessment and any decisions taken as a consequence can help to narrow the gap between rhetoric and practice by ensuring that parents are truly partners in the decision-making process. Without this legislative support parents are dependent upon the goodwill of professionals and have no effective redress in the event of disagreement.

Finally, legislation can help to change attitudes. What is required by statute has more status than what is optional. A country that legislates for special educational provision confers legitimacy on that provision and makes it more likely that professionals, parents and the public will view it in a positive way.

It is worth noting that most countries in the UNESCO Review had legislation of some kind concerning the education of those with disabilities. (In a few cases pupils with disabilities were deemed to be included in the general legislation on education for all pupils.) Two-thirds of the countries referred to new legislation under discussion or about to be introduced. This ranged from losely formulated discussion of the need for various legislative developments to definite plans to introduce regulations governing specific aspects of educational provision. A wide range of topics was covered - early intervention, family support, new curricula, developments in general education to facilitate integration, teacher training and administrative responsibility for mentally retarded children.

The Review noted the different legislative baselines of the different countries but identified two tentative trends none the less: a general

acknowledgement of the need to underpin developments in provision with appropriate legislative action; and a tendency for the frameworks for special education and general education to move toward each other, albeit slowly.

Legislation in education is no panacea, and it would be easy to pick out examples where legislation has had a negative impact. There can be little doubt, however, but that appropriate legislation is an essential tool in developing and maintaining an effective education system for children and young people with disabilities.

The key elements of appropriate legislation have been implied above - clear statement of policy, coherent framework for provision, conduit of resources and guarantee of consumers' rights. In addition, special education legislation should be based on a correct understanding of disabilitites and their educational implications. There is a great deal of outmoded thinking on disability and special education, and it is very unfortunate when these defective understandings are built into legislation. National legislation must take account of a country's stage of development, but limited resources do not justify adopting laws that will lead down blind alleys and foster inappropriate forms of provision.

Finally, legislation must be enforced. Instruments are mere ornaments unless they are used. Legislative instruments likewise must feed into practice. Thus, provision must be made for implementation and monitoring if legislative action is to have its intended effect.

Administrative support

The administration and organisation of special education raise particular problems. These stem from the multiplicity of tasks to be carried out, the dispersion of responsibility for them and, in many countries, the diversity of funding sources. Special education extends beyond education into health, social welfare and rehabilitation. As well as teachers, it involves psychologists, health workers and therapists.

The UNESCO Review found that education ministries were responsible for special education in most - though not all - cases. (Social affairs ministries were the usual alternative.) Frequently, however, this was not an exclusive responsibility: various responsibilities were vested in other ministries or shared with them. Thus, health ministries were often responsible for pre-school provision and labour ministries for vocational training and rehabilitation. In some cases particular groups of children were the sole responsibility of ministries other than education - eg mentally retarded children (health or social affairs), delinquents (justice).

The most common administrative arrangement was to have within the ministry of education a separate department dealing with special education. Generally the special education system ran parallel to the mainstream system, with modifications as judged necessary, and the function of the special education department was to provide the administrative structure for this parallel system. In some cases, the age range was divided up differently in the two systems, or the special education system extended over a longer period of time. There were other organisational models. In some cases, special education was subsumed under the department dealing with primary education, reflecting th main thrust of provision. In other cases special education was administered as part of the general system, without any separate administrative structure.

About one-third of countries had a special education co-ordinating body at national level. These bodies had representatives from various government departments and non-governmental agencies concerned with special educational provision. They were charged with maintaining an overview of developments relating to children and young people (and sometimes adults as well) with disabilities.

The importance of appropriate administrative support for special education is twofold: it shapes the nature of the provision made; and it provides the co-ordination that is necessary.

The impact of the administrative arrangements on the nature of provision can be seen clearly in relation to integration. When special education is administered quite separately from the general education system, it

is difficult to achieve much integration at the level of practice. Even if the policy is in favour of integration, the separation of funding, teacher supply and curriculum that is entailed by separate administrative arrangements place major obstacles in the way of implementing the policy.

This example shows that administrative structures are not neutral in their effect. They create the framework within which educational provision is made but also determine the nature of that provision to an extent. This framework can facilitate or obstruct setting up certain types of provision, and so can determine whether or not policy objectives are met.

The co-ordinating functions of administration are wide-ranging where special education is concerned. They can encompass planning, resource allocation, the supply and training of personnel, buildings, materials and transport in addition to co-ordinating the different service elements. In many countries these functions entail activity, and corresponding administrative structures, at national, regional and local levels.

Financial arrangements impose another layer of complexity. While state funding is the predominant source of financing for special education, funding is also supplied by voluntary bodies, parents and, in some developing countries, aid programmes and international organisations. In many countries voluntary bodies, while no longer providing substantial funding, have through their legacy of past initiatives a central role in organising educational and other provision for those with disabilities.

These various factors combine to underline the importance of having a strong and coherent administrative structure. When basic educational services are missing or inadequate, it can be tempting to disregard the need for administrative support. Expenditure on administration must be kept in proportion of course, and subject to regular review, but it would be shortsighted to scrimp on it unduly. An effective and appropriately resourced administrative service is essential to getting best value from the resources that are available and ensuring that they are expended in accordance with policy objectives.

The UNESCO Consultation on Special Education attached major importance, for all countries, to the development of a realistic national plan, based on a clear statement of resources including personnel and backed by a national commitment at the highest decision-making level. Particularly within developing countries, resources are unlikely to be available to do everything that might be desired. Choices have to be made, affecting different disability groupings, age ranges, linguistic and cultural minorities, urban and rural dwellers, and so on. An important function of the national plan is to set priorities between competing claims. When resources are limited, rough justice may be all that is possible, but it is better that the criteria on which decisions are taken be made explicit so that they can be seen to be justified or challenged if not.

Educational provision

The whole point of special educational provision is to ensure that children and young people with disabilities receive an appropriate education, and everything within the underlying system must be directed to achieving that. This can be considered in terms of the curriculum and in terms of the schooling and other structures needed to translate the curriculum into practice. Underlying both sets of considerations is the central principle of integration.

First, consider the schooling and other structures required to deliver education. The predominant form of provision currently is segregated special schooling. This is evident from Table 3 which presents the summary of provision reported in the UNESCO Review.

Table 3

Number of countries using different forms of provision

	No	Total
Day special schools	54	58
Boarding special schools	53	"
Special classes in regular schools	44	"
Support teaching in regular classes	37	"
Schools in hospitals	31	"
Schools in other institutions	28	"

When this is set alongside the figures in the Introduction showing how few children with disabilities receive an appropriate education, the

limitations of existing schooling structures become very plain. It is difficult to see how they can meet the enormous shortfall in provision. These considerations led the UNESCO Consultation (UNESCO, 1988b) to the bald conclusion:

'Given the size of the demand and the limited resources available, the education and training needs of the majority of disabled persons cannot be met by special schools and centres.'

This conclusion if accepted has major implications for special schools and ordinary schools alike. Special schooling is not the answer to the shortfall in special educational provision. Moreover, the resources currently devoted to special schools which serve a relatively small number of children need to be examined in the context of the widespread failure to make any special educational provision for large numbers of children. Ordinary schools too must come under scrutiny. The reason special schools are established is to cater for children that ordinary schools fail. Ordinary schools that continue to be inadequate can hardly be offered as a serious alternative to special schools.

The way ahead has to be by bringing about change in both special schools and ordinary schools. Ordinary schools have to develop their teaching and curricula so that they cater for a greater diversity of pupil need than at present, while special schools must develop an outward looking stance and take on significantly new roles.

In an ideal world there would be no special schools since every child would receive an appropriate education in a local community school. No country is near achieving that goal apart perhaps from Italy, and it has to be assumed that special schools will feature on the map of special education for some time to come. But that does not mean they can continue unchanged.

Special schools have many advantages - concentration of expertise in teaching pupils with various disabilities, modified curricula and programmes of work, adapted buildings and equipment, training opportunities for staff, links with local employers and post-school training agencies. These are the very things whose absence in ordinary schools makes them ineffectual in educating pupils with disabilitites. The challenge to special schools then is to find ways of sharing their

expertise and resources and embedding them in a wider educational context.

Some special schools have already begun to develop outreach programmes. This can entail setting up working links with neighbourhood ordinary schools where staff and pupils are shared. Some special schools act as resource centres, providing information and consultancy to local schools, organising support services for families and contributing to in-service training activities. Discharging these functions successfully requires considerable changes within special school staff. New skills must be developed and attitudes fostered. Transmitting a skill to others is not the same as exercising it oneself, and operating across several schools or in the community is very different from working in the closed confines of a single special school. The most important changes required are attitudinal: staff who are jealous of their autonomy and intent on maintaining lines of professional demarcation will not set up effective collaboration. There must be a willingness to move beyond existing institutional bases and any status that may go with them and to work cooperatively in whatever new structures may be advised.

The upshot of all this is that special schools of the future could be very different from now. The emphasis would move away from educating limited numbers of pupils in relative isolation and toward acting as resource centres. The latter could encompass curriculum development, in-service training, the collection and evaluation of equipment and computer software, specialist assessment, as well as advice and consultation on all matters relating to the education of pupils with disabilities.

These resource centre functions are important in improving the standard of special educational provision regardless of where it is provided. By capitalising on available experience and establishing a bank of information, materials and expertise, this offers a powerful model for making best use of frequently limited resources.

If special schools have to make changes, ordinary schools have to undergo revolution. Ordinary schools have generally failed pupils with disabilities and major school reform is necessary before they can make

adequate provision for them. This reform must operate at two levels: the academic organisation and curriculum provision of the school; and the professional development of staff. The former requires rethinking the ways in which pupils are grouped for teaching purposes, the arrangements that schools can make for supplementary teaching and the modifications to the mainstream curriculum that teachers can make so as to give pupils with disabilities access to it. All of this forces major change in teacher behaviour. Attitudes, knowledge and skills must all be developed to create and sustain a new kind of school where those previously disenfranchised are given an equal say and narrow concepts of normality are discarded.

Early childhood education

Experience in a wide variety of settings has shown the importance of early childhood education. The absence of appropriate stimulation in infancy and early childhood ranks alongside malnutrition and poverty as a major source of disadvantage and retarded development. This is true of all children but is especially so for children with disabilities. If sensory perception is impaired, for instance, enhanced stimulation is required to compensate, but frequently what is offered is even less stimulation not more. Indeed, the interruption of normal patterns of development arising from a disability is often more handicapping for the child than the direct consequences of the disability itself.

Despite this the provision of early childhood education is very restricted. Half of the countries in the UNESCO Review acknowledged that they had limited or no preschool provision for children with disabilities. Where provision was available, it tended to be focussed on those with overt physical or sensory impairments. It was also concentrated on urban areas, so that those living in the countryside had very little access to provision.

The forms of provision most commonly reported were early intervention programmes allied to home teaching, preschool groups attached to special schools, and placements in nursery schools and classes for normal children.

Given the dearth of provision, almost any form of placement or support for early childhood education must be welcomed. There are two

principles which should be given paramount importance, however: normalisation; and parental/community involvement. Even when children's development is very retarded, the developmental gap between them and age peers at this stage is relatively small - certainly in comparison with later - and every effort should be made to provide for them alongside peers and within a common organisational framework. As to involving parents and the community, this can hardly be over-stressed. Parents and the extended family are the principal, and in some cases the only, source of structured stimulation these children receive. Whatever little can be achieved by formal intervention, it can only be enhanced by being tied into and made to reinforce family activities and community relationships.

A particular challenge arises from the fact that much early intervention is not statutory. Where state support is provided, there is an additional problem of coordination because of the multiplicity of agencies concerned. Given these circumstances, it is important that all concerned - voluntary bodies, staff, parents and state officials - develop a common policy and approach. Overcoming the disadvantages resulting from disability must be the paramount concern of all so that the limited resources commanded by early childhood education have maximum beneficial effect.

Preparation for adult life

Schooling is for all young people a form of preparation for adult life. The knowledge and skills acquired at school help them make their way when they leave it. For many young people the normal school curriculum is not sufficient preparation, whether it be for the world of work or for independent adult living, and specific preparation provided during the later years of school and subsequently is extremely beneficial.

All of this holds true in far greater measure for those who have disabilities. Many of these learn more slowly than their peers and may have limited academic achievements at the time of normal school leaving age. More significantly, a great many will not yet be ready for independent adult living. The conclusion to be drawn from this is not the traditional one that little can be done since independent living is a remote target, but rather that far more needs to be done precisely because existing support efforts have left this target so remote.

Regrettably, the amount of provision available to assist people with disabilities toward independent adult living is far too little. This holds true of developed and developing countries alike. More attention has been given in recent years in some countries and there have been a number of widely documented initiatives, but provision generally is sporadic at best and frequently non-existent. The UNESCO Review found that a majority of countries responding had limited or no post-school provision for those with disabilities.

The twin goals of action in this area are to help young people become economically active and lead lives that are as full and independent as possible.

Where special educational provision is well developed at school level, steps should be taken to ensure adequate preparation for life after school. This should cover both work and daily living. Preparation for work can include careers education and guidance, pre-vocational training and work experience. In some cases schools will provide direct vocational training, though substantial programmes in this area would normally be the responsibility of post-school agencies. the primary task for schools is to give young people, regardless of whether or not they have disabilities, a broad range of appropriate life skills, rather than to train them for specific jobs.

Technical and vocational training must take account of the local labour market and industrial infrastructure. It must however be forward-looking in respect of technological developments, which can significantly expand opportunities for people with disabilities.

Training can be provided in specialist training colleges or training centres catering exclusively for people with disabilities, and many such establishments have been set up. There is a growing realisation that those with disabilities can benefit from the training opportunities available to the general population. This is leading to initiatives to incorporate training provision for people with disabilities into the general system for technical and vocational education. This entails substantial alterations in the latter as well as major changes in attitude, but it is a step toward the normalisation of experience for people with disabilities.

Parental involvement

Parents of children with disabilities can play a major role in their education - if facilitated and allowed. This can include assisting in school activities, contributing to assessment and curriculum planning, implementing programmes at home and monitoring progress.

This role is first and foremost a matter of principle: parents have the right to be involved in their children's education. It is also, particularly in developing countries, a matter of securing the best interests of children with disabilities. An account of a family support programme in Kenya opens with the claim that 'the greatest resource in a developing country for helping the disabled lead lives which are as fulfilling and productive as possible is a well-advised and supported family' (Arnold, 1988). Parents are the child's first and natural teachers, and it makes sense to help them discharge this role to the best of their ability.

The UNESCO Review gathered information on parental involvement in assessment procedures and placement decision-making. Practice generally fell short of the ideal of parents as partners. In some countries assessment procedures included asking parents for details on the child's early development, but in the majority of cases no role was reported for them. As for participating in decision-making, the best they could generally hope for was the reactive role of agreeing to, or taking issue with, the educational placement proposed for their child by the professionals.

There is little argument about the desirability of involving parents as partners in their children's education. The challenge now is to translate the rhetoric about it into practical action. The strategies to be adopted will vary from country to country and must be articulated with local conditions and resources in mind. There are three fundamental conditions that must be borne in mind in all instances:

(i) Empowering parents. If parents are to play an effective part in their children's education - after having been excluded for so long - they must be enabled to do so. This entails sharing information with them - on their child's condition and programme and on the facilities available. Teachers and other professionals must value what parents do

and take steps to build up their confidence. They must give parents appropriate programmes and other ways of structuring their children's experience. They must give them access to schools and their own professional sanctums. Above all, they must acknowledge their right to contribute to decisions that affect their children.

(ii) Changing the roles of professionals. None of the above can happen without major changes in the role perceptions of professionals. If parents are to be truly empowered, professionals have to be convinced of the need to demystify their professional domains. They must be willing to give their skills away, or at least to deploy their skills through less expert hands. This in turn calls for new skills on their part - skills of dialogue, collaboration, team building and review. Above all, it requires on the part of many professionals a different concept of their professional domain and a different attitude to the exercise of their professional skills.

(iii) Working toward community participation. Community-based approaches to health, social welfare and rehabilitation have attracted much attention in recent years. They are seen to have particular relevance to developing countries where there is a vast pool of untapped human resources. Community-based approaches have not been developed extensively in special education but the model is likely to be just as appropriate to it as to other aspects of provision. It provides a natural context for parental involvement in special educational provision. Parents and family are part of a community, and a holistic involvement of the former also enrols the wider community in support and responsibility.

Training

Developments in special educational provision are critically dependent upon the quality of teaching available. This in turn depends on the opportunities for training and professional development open to teachers. Teacher training, particularly in-service training, takes on extra significance at a time of change. When conceptualisations of handicap are being revised and integration means that teachers in ordinary schools are expected to teach pupils with disabilities,

training that was previously adequate may now need to be supplemented or restructured. This fact is a particular challenge in countries where basic teacher training is limited anyway.

The UNESCO Review painted a gloomy picture on training. Only a minority of the 58 countries reported coverage of disability issues in the teacher training available to all teachers. Inservice training opportunities for teachers in ordinary schools were similarly limited. A wide range of training opportunities were reported for teachers specialising in special education - a five-year course in a training college at one extreme to on-the-job instruction offered on an ad hoc basis at the other. A further UNESCO study, specifically on teacher training, provided more detailed information on training arrangements in 14 countries (Bowman et al, 1985; Bowman 1986). This showed the diversity of arrangements made, ranging from extended full-time courses in specialist training institutions to distance learning offered on a modular basis to serving teachers.

While it is difficult to generalise across so many countries, at different stages of development, it seems clear that the main thrust of training at present is directed at the specialist who will be working in segregated special schools. It is important to have such specialists and any training blueprint for the future should allow for a continuing supply of appropriate specialists. But there is also a major need of less highly trained workers. A very great number of children with disabilities could be helped in ordinary schools by relatively minor adjustments to the teaching provided in ordinary schools. Thus, a modest investment in low-level training could bring about major improvements in the special educational provision offered by schools.

A national plan for teacher training has to start with initial training. A major objective for all countries should be to ensure that all trainee teachers should learn something about disabilities and be aware of some of their educational implications. They would not become experts in teaching pupils with disabilities but they would learn how to modify the curriculum content and teaching approach of the ordinary classroom so as to give access to substantial numbers of pupils with disabilities. They would acquire some skills in identifying and assessing pupils with disabilities. They would appreciate the importance of working with

parents and develop appropriate skills. They would also know where their own competence stopped and how they could benefit from collaborating with specialists.

A national plan should also make provision for in-service training for classroom teachers and headteachers on matters relating to disability. Even if substantial improvements were made in initial training, this is at the edge of the problem and is best seen as an investment in future. Most serving teachers for many years to come will not be affected by innovations in initial training. It is, moreover, those teachers who are long-serving and experienced who occupy the positions of leadership in schools. They take the crucial decisions on the curriculum and effectively control the progress of any school reform.

Relevant in-service training can be provided in a great variety of ways. At the most basic level general awareness courses can be provided for individual teachers or, more usefully, for all the staff in a school. The latter can be arranged quite economically by occasional training days when staff come together without pupils. The training input for such school-based training can come from a member of the school's own staff that has been on a training course, from special school staff or from some other disability specialist in the neighbourhood. More substantial training can be provided by arranging for individual staff members to go on appropriate courses.

Training arrangements must also ensure a supply of specialists in disability. Some countries have separate training routes for ordinary teachers and for teachers specialising in disability. This may be compatible with a high level of expertise on the part of the latter, but it is not conducive to integrated education. Many countries incorporate training for specialists within the framework of training for all teachers, and some require those intending to specialise in pupils with disability to first spend some time teaching in ordinary schools. However the initial training of specialist teachers is organised, it is important that regular opportunities for in-service training and professional renewal be offered to these teachers.

Research and development

Educating pupils with disabilities is a complex matter. It is likely to

be significantly improved if based on good information about the nature of these children's learning needs and how best to meet them.

Four broad areas of relevant research and development activity can be identified:

(i) Studies designed to separate out the different forms of disability, deepen understanding of them and clarify their educational implications. These should draw on a variety of areas of study - medical, psychological, sociological - in addition to education.

(ii) Incidence surveys to establish the extent of local need.

(iii) Development activities directed at curricula, teaching approaches and the deployment of resources. This is a very broad area, including activities as diverse as developing sign languages, devising individual learning programmes and mobilising community resources for educational purposes.

(iv) Evaluation. This too is exceedingly broad but also quite essential. Educational programmes, particularly at a time of change, must be monitored to make sure that they are achieving their objectives and that resources are being used to maximum beneficial effect.

The UNESCO Review found that one-third of countries responding allocated separate national funds for research and development in special education, though the size of the allocations were not recorded. The research topics cited with greatest frequency were integration, early intervention, the organisation of special education, the transition from school to adult life and incidence surveys.

The priority given to research and development is worth noting, and it is to be hoped that the very modest expenditure on it will not be seen as an expendable luxury in the face of the inexorable pressure on service budgets. This is related to the major need for better information exchange. The UNESCO Review pointed out that 'much can be learned from others' research and curriculum development, from their legislative practices and from the ways in which they organise and

de!iver services'. No less important than maintaining a research and development capacity to service local needs is an efficient means of exchanging information with other countries and capitalising on their information base.

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